

Jimmy Hoffa:

Mr. Chairman, fellow Teamsters, members, Teamsters' wives, and friends, tonight we are gathered in meetings like this across the length and breadth of the land for the first DRIVE meeting of the month. Thousands of Teamster families attending these meetings are dramatic evidence of the union's vitality, and their meetings each month will give more strength to DRIVE.

And more strength to DRIVE is important to each Teamster family, because we are today in a fight in politics that is every bit as grim as historic battles on the picket line. The workers were embattled against company goons, spies, the police, the National Guard. The battle has now shifted from the picket line to the halls of Congress. The employer has recognized that he cannot beat the worker in a test of economic strength, so he has shifted the battle to halls of Congress, where he seeks the enactment of laws which will cripple labor in its efforts to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing.

Tonight, we will hear the voices of two great Americans who are two champions of the working men. In a real sense, these two men are directly responsible for the standard of living you and your families are enjoying today. The life work of each of these men helped make it possible for you to hold your head high, to provide a decent living for your family, a new home, a car, an education for your children.

Daniel J. Tobin was Mr. Teamster himself. He was a Team driver in Boston, and learned the value of teamwork through his union early in life. He dedicated himself to the Teamsters union. He became its leader as a young man, and came to lead it with glory and distinction for almost half a century. Dan Tobin saw the need for labor's strong voice in politics. He recognized another great American, a leader who would fight for the workers' just rights. That leader was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. And Daniel J. Tobin, the Teamster, served as chairman of the National Labor Committee for Roosevelt in all four of his successful campaigns.

Daniel Tobin's faith was well-rewarded. Under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the labor movement for the first time became free to truly bargain with the employers through representatives of their own choosing. The Wagner Act became labor's magna carta. Now tonight in the light of proposed anti-trust laws, compulsory arbitration laws, which would virtually abolish labor organizations as we have known them, it is important that we hear these voices out of the past, because of what they tell us, and what they tell will help us to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The voice you will now hear is that of a great Teamster and a great American leader, one of whose friendship I have cherished during his lifetime, and his memory I will revere for the rest of my life. You will now hear the late Daniel J. Tobin, one of the great Americans of all times. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, through our Teamster Convention in Constitution Hall in 1940.

Announcer: Good evening, ladies and gentleman. The National Broadcasting Company in a program sponsored by the Democratic National Committee brings you an address by the President of the United States, his first major speech in his campaign for reelection.

[Applause]

Announcer: Fourteen hundred delegates of the AF of L International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen and Helpers of America, representing more than 400,000 union members, are now meeting in Washington for their annual convention. And it is to this group and their guests gathered in Constitution Hall that he will speak. Daniel J. Tobin, the president of the union, long an intimate friend of the chief executive, and until recently one of his administrative assistants, will present him. Mr. Tobin?

Daniel Tobin: Will the delegates be seated? Fellow delegates, visitors, and invited guests to this memorable convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, you are meeting in the capital of our nation in perhaps the most dangerous and crucial period in the history of our country or in the history of the world. The civilization and freedom which our ancestors fought for and suffered for in order to preserve is at this particular time battling for its continuance, or perhaps I should say for its very existence.

Strong and powerful organizations of labor that flourished successfully a few years ago have been destroyed in many countries throughout the world, and their leadership eliminated. You have come here from every sector of the country, and it will be your privilege in a few moments to listen to the man whom I believe stands forth as the greatest influence in this world of today for the continued preservation of that liberty and freedom which we as Americans presently enjoy.

In all of my experience with leadership in public and political life, I know of no individual who has so consistently and sincerely and at great sacrifice fought for the betterment of the masses of the people, the working classes of the nation. During all of his public

life, he has consistently espoused the battle for the rights and freedom and for a better day for those who give all and receive little. I rejoice as your representative to have this privilege of introducing this great world leader, this human, God-fearing, emancipator of the toilers, who in recent years has insisted in striking from the bodies and souls of the workers the shackles which have strangled them and deprived them of their rights and liberties in the past. I present to you President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Mr. Tobin, members of the convention, I'm in a sort of a quandary tonight. I don't know whether this is a political speech or not.

[Laughter]

Franklin Roosevelt: I don't know because these days if in a certain period of the year you refer in any way to things that happened in the days of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, or any other period in the past, including the past seven years –

[Laughter]

Franklin Roosevelt: – it's a great question as to whether you are talking American history or politics.

[Laughter]

Franklin Roosevelt: And so I throw myself upon your indulgence and the indulgence of the radio companies who would in the one case be paid and in the other case not be paid.

[Laughter]

Franklin Roosevelt: And I throw myself on the indulgence of the American public. I don't know.

[Laughter]

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: It is one of the characteristics of a free and democratic modern nation that we have free and independent labor unions. In country after country in other lands, labor unions have disappeared as the

iron hand of the dictator has taken command. Only in free lands have free labor unions survived.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: And when trade union workers assemble with freedom and independence in a convention like this, it is proof that in America democracy has remained unimpaired. It is a symbol of our determination to keep it free.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Yours is now one of the greatest international labor unions of America. You can remember, however, other days, days when labor unions were considered almost un-American by some individuals in our land. You can remember when it was rare indeed for an employer even to consider collective bargaining with his workers, when it was the common practice to discharge any worker who joined a union.

You can remember when employees sought to meet threatened strikes by demanding that their government, federal or state, call out armed troops. You can remember when many large employers resorted to the un-American practice, still unfortunately followed in some sections of the land, of hiring labor spies and setting up private arsenals to ferret out and destroy members of the union.

The cause of labor has traveled forward since those days over a long road, a road beset with difficulties, difficulties both from within its membership and from without. Your organization is an outstanding example of the progress that has been made. By 1933, which seems almost like ancient history to me, your membership had dropped in that year to 70,000. Within the last seven years, you have grown to a membership of 500,000.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: In those same seven years, organized labor as a whole has become stronger in membership, stronger in influence, and stronger in its capacity to serve the interests of the laboring man and woman and of society in general, than at any other time in our whole history. Much of this progress has been due, I like to think, to the one thing that this administration from the very beginning has insisted upon, the assurance to labor of the untrammelled right, right, not privilege, but right to organize.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Yes, the right to bargain collectively with their employers. That principle has now become firmly imbedded in the law of the land. It must remain as the foundation of industrial relations for all time.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: And within - with that foundation, the last seven years have seen a series of laws, laws enacted to give to labor a fair share, or perhaps I should say a fairer share, though we haven't gone the length of the road yet, a fairer share of the good life to which free men and women in a free nation are entitled as a matter of right.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Fair minimum wages are being established for workers in industry. Decent maximum hours and days of labor have been set, to bring about the objective of an American standard of living and recreation. Child labor has been outlawed in practically all factories. A system of employment exchanges has been created. Machinery has been set up and strengthened and successfully used in almost every case for the mediation of labor disputes. Over them all has been created a shelter of social security, a foundation upon which we are trying to build protection from hazards of old age and unemployment.

But you and I know that this progress of the last seven years has been mighty difficult. It's been beset by obstructions and by bitter propaganda from certain minority groups in the community who have been accustomed for too many years to the exploitation of the great mass of people who worked for them. It was the same type of opposition to which I had become accustomed a great many years ago, during the very beginning of what has been a certain amount of varied experience dating back to my first election to the Senate of the State of New York thirty years ago this autumn, continuing through my service for nearly eight years as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and my service during four years as Governor of the largest labor-employing state in the union.

You will remember that kind of opposition in the campaign of four years ago – four years ago, when certain employers, certain politicians, and certain newspapers, all of whom are now active in this campaign, in an effort to mislead and intimidate labor, four years ago they went to the extent of putting untrue electioneering notices in pay envelopes in order to smash the new Social Security

Act and to force its repeal by electing its enemies. That kind of opposition comes only too often from those who regularly for three years and eight months block labor's welfare, and then for four months loudly proclaim that they are labor's true friends –

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: From those – may I put it this way – from those who love the laboring man in November but forget him in January.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: In spite of that opposition the vast majority of our small businessmen have now become convinced that the gains of labor are the gains of the entire interdependent community, and that the welfare of labor is indispensable to the welfare of all. They know now that their best customer is a satisfied, adequately paid worker with a feeling of security against unemployment and against poverty in his old age.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: We are still, however, quite distant from the objective we seek – the security and the high standard of living for every man, woman, and child that the resources and manpower of America make possible.

Our advance has been accomplished with patience and deliberation. That, I think, is the democratic way. That is the road that leads to lasting results. Here in America we have kept our feet on the ground. Our progress has been steady and sure, and we have not been misled by illusory promises.

Events abroad, that's a different story. Events abroad have shown too late the result of the other kind of method, promises of swift, revolutionary relief, seductive pictures of panaceas, shortcuts to prosperity and plenty, pictured as simple and easy. All of these have led, and I'm talking recent history, they have led to the same cruel disappointment. For these promises people yielded up their liberties and all that made life dear. In exchange, they have received only the rationing of their news, the rationing of their religion, the rationing of the clothes upon their backs, and the rationing of the bread upon their tables.

Our progress must continue to be a steady and deliberate one. We cannot stand still. We cannot slip back. We must look forward to

certain definite things in the future, yes, the near future. For example, the benefits of social security today ought to be broadened and extended. Unemployment insurance ought to cover a larger number of workers. Our old-age pension system ought to be improved and extended. The amount of the pension ought to be increased. And, above all, these pensions must be given in a manner that will respect the dignity of the life of service and labor which our aged citizens have given to the nation they love.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Yes, it's my hope that soon the United States will have a national system under which no needy man or woman within our borders will lack a minimum old-age pension that will provide adequate food, adequate for clothing, and adequate lodging to the end of the road, and without having to go to the poorhouse to get it.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: And I look forward to a system coupled with that, a system which in addition to this bare minimum will enable those who have faithfully toiled in any occupation to build up additional security for their old age that will allow them to live in comfort and in happiness.

The people must decide whether to continue the type of government that has fostered the progress to date, or whether to turn it over to those who by their action, if not always by their word, have shown their fundamental opposition to the main objectives toward which we have worked in the past and to which we are definitely committed for the future.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: There are some who would not only stop now the progress we are making in social and labor legislation, but would even repeal what has been enacted during the past seven years on the plea that an adequate national defense requires the repeal. They would seek unlimited hours of labor. They would seek lower wages. They would seek the cancellation of those safeguards for which we have all struggled so long. I still believe, as I did when I said way back on the 28th of May last, we must make sure in all that we do that there is no breakdown or cancellation of any of the great social gains that we have made in these past years. There is nothing in our present emergency to justify a retreat from any of our social

objectives – conservation of resources, assistance to agriculture, better housing, and help to the underprivileged.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: Yes, our mighty national defense effort that we are engaged in today, all of us, against all present and potential threats, that effort cannot be measured alone in terms of mathematical increase in the number of soldiers and sailors and guns and tanks and planes. Behind them all must stand a united people whose spiritual and moral strength has not been sapped through hunger or want or fear or insecurity. The morale of a people is an essential supplement to their guns and planes.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: And so I come near the close. In our efforts for national defense, fine teamwork throughout the nation has been developed, and you who are Teamsters in this great organization know what that word teamwork means.

[Applause]

Franklin Roosevelt: The continuance of this teamwork after the present emergency is all over will have consequences of lasting good to the nation as a whole. It will enable us to enjoy an internal security that I hope will transcend anything we have known heretofore.

Ours is a great heritage. We are determined with all our effort and all our might to keep it intact. The workers in the factories, the farmers on the land, the businessmen in plants and offices, are at last awake to the perils that threaten America. No selfish interest, no personal ambition, yes, no political campaign, can sway the majority will of our people of America to make America strong and to keep America free.

[Applause]

Jimmy Hoffa: This is Jimmy Hoffa again. I hope these words of two great Americans inspire you as they did me. Take these words to heart. Talk them over as you drive home tonight. Discuss them across the family table. If you will do this, I'm sure you'll resolve to give DRIVE your full family support during this crucial election period. We must keep faith with men like Daniel Tobin and Franklin Delano Roosevelt if we are to keep faith with ourselves.

Here we are in 1964, enjoying our successes, recognizing that the laws passed by the Congress of the United States, such as the Taft-Hartley Law, Landrum-Griffin Law, is each day taking away from the American worker the economic self-support that has been enjoyed by labor unions since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, placing shackles upon us that prevent the right of free speech, prevent the right of self-help, force members to go through picket lines, force members to work with scabs, and last but not least, dividing and conquering labor for the sole purpose of management, being able to have greater and greater profits, and labor losing its voice at the bargaining table.

Look at the labor movement today and see millions of working people excluded from the minimum wage protection laws of the legislative bodies of our nation. Fifty million people make less than \$3,000.00 a year, while the Labor Department publicly states in their pamphlets and their information bulletins that a family of four must have a minimum of \$6,000.00 per year. And yet the legislative bodies both state and federal have failed to recognize and continue to refuse to recognize that there should be no working person outside of the minimum wage hour laws. The very basic minimum wage hour law in this country should not be less than \$1.50 per hour.

Today, in 1964, in the richest country in the world, these things are happening. Dan Tobin just said to us that FDR, working for a better day for those who gave all and receive little. Let's face it. That better day has not yet arrived for millions of people in our country, and not only for millions of workers, but for millions of unemployed workers, too.

The trade union movement is not going to desert the unemployed. One out of every five in this country has a period of unemployment last year. Do you know that every month, seven million Americans live on surplus food handout? They live on cornmeal day after day. In some of our cities, the unemployment rate's as high as 5 to 19 percent. In fact, with young people, it's often higher than that. There are hundreds of thousands of young people who left school four or five years ago, have never had a job of any kind.

We boast of our standard of living, while seven million people live on the surplus food program. We talk about having the finest medical system in the whole world. One out of every four of the young inductees that are called in by the Armed Services become medical rejects right away, and the chronically sick old people in the tens of thousands go without any care whatsoever.

What are we going to do about it? What can we do about it? We must organize in the precincts as we've organized in the shops. We must get registered and see to it that our families and our friends are registered to vote. We must get out the vote on election day.

Daniel J. Tobin would be proud to see you at this meeting, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt would applaud you. You are now carrying the torch that they first kindled. We are in politics, and we are in politics to stay. It must be so. None of our gains, our contracts, our wages, our conditions, our pensions and security in the golden years of our life are safe unless we talk through political strength.

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